

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): An optical writing device comprising:

a housing having an opening;

a dustproof member configured to be light permeable and close the opening;

a light source installed in said housing and configured to irradiate an image carrier with a light beam through said dustproof member;

a shield movable between a first position to cover said dustproof member and a second position to uncover said dustproof member; and

a cleaner attached to said shield and arranged to contact at least a part of the dustproof member during the first and second positions.

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Original): The optical writing device according to Claim 1, further comprising a driver for moving said shield.

Claim 4 (Original): The optical writing device according to Claim 3, further comprising a positioning mechanism configured to position said shield to the first position by using said driver.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): An image forming apparatus for electrophotographic image forming comprising:

an image carrier for carrying an image formed with irradiation of a light beam; and

an optical writing device comprising:

a housing having an opening;
a dustproof member configured to be light permeable and close the opening;
a light source installed in said housing and configured to irradiate said image carrier with the light beam through said dustproof member;
a shield movable between a first position to cover said dustproof member and a second position to uncover said dustproof member; and
a cleaner attached to said shield and arranged to contact at least a part of the dustproof member during the first and second positions.

Claim 6 (Canceled).

Claim 7 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to Claim 5, wherein said optical writing device further comprises a driver for moving said shield.

Claim 8 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein said optical writing device further comprises a positioning mechanism configured to position said shield to the first position by using said driver while an image forming operation of the image forming apparatus is inactive.

Claim 9 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to Claim 5, further comprising a driver for moving said shield.

Claim 10 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to Claim 9, further comprising a positioning mechanism configured to position said shield to the first position by

using said driver while an image forming operation of the image forming apparatus is inactive.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): An image forming apparatus for electrophotographic image forming comprising:

an image carrier configured to carry an image formed with irradiation of a light beam;

an optical writing device comprising:

a housing having an opening;

a dustproof member configured to be light permeable and close the opening;

a light source installed in said housing and configured to irradiate said image carrier with the light beam through said dustproof member;

a shield movable between a first position to cover said dustproof member and a second position to uncover said dustproof member; and

a cleaner attached to said shield and arranged to contact at least a part of the dustproof member during the first and second positions.

Claim 12 (Canceled).

Claim 13 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to Claim 11, further comprising a driver for moving said shield.

Claim 14 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to Claim 13, further comprising a positioning mechanism configured to position said shield to the first position by using said driver while an image forming operation of the image forming apparatus is inactive.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): An optical writing device comprising:
a housing for enclosing an optical writing mechanism, said housing having an opening;

~~shielding~~ dustproofing means for light-permeably shielding the opening;

light irradiating means for irradiating an external image carrier with a light beam through said ~~shielding~~ dustproofing means;

~~covering~~ shielding means for covering said ~~shielding~~ dustproofing means during an inactive state of the optical writing mechanism and uncovering said ~~shielding~~ dustproofing means during an active state; and

cleaning ~~said~~ means for cleaning an exterior of said ~~shielding~~ dustproofing means and configured to contact at least a part of the ~~shielding~~ dustproofing means during the active and inactive states.

Claim 16 (Canceled).

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): The optical writing device according to Claim 15, further comprising driving means for activating said ~~covering~~ shielding means.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): The optical writing device according to Claim 17, further comprising positioning means for positioning said ~~covering~~ shielding means by using said driving means when the optical writing mechanism is inactive.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): An image forming apparatus for electrophotographic image forming, comprising:

image carrying means for carrying an image formed with irradiation of a light beam;
and

optical writing means comprising:

a housing for enclosing an optical writing mechanism, said housing having an opening;

~~shielding~~ dustproofing means for light-permeably closing the opening;

light irradiating means for irradiating said image carrying means with the light beam through said ~~closing~~ dustproofing means;

~~covering~~ shielding means for covering said ~~shielding~~ dustproofing means during an inactive state of the optical writing mechanism and uncovering said ~~shielding~~ dustproofing means during an active state; and

cleaning means for cleaning an exterior of said ~~shielding~~ dustproofing means and configured to contact at least a part of the ~~shielding~~ dustproofing means during the active and inactive states.

Claim 20 (Canceled).

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): The image forming apparatus according to Claim 19, wherein said optical writing means further comprises driving means for activating said ~~covering~~ shielding means.

Claim 22 (Currently Amended): The image forming apparatus according to Claim 21, wherein said optical writing means further comprises positioning means for positioning said ~~covering~~ shielding means by using said driving means while an image forming operation of the image forming apparatus is inactive.

Claim 23 (Currently Amended): The image forming apparatus according to Claim 19, further comprising driving means for activating said ~~covering~~ shielding means.

Claim 24 (Currently Amended): The image forming apparatus according to Claim 23, further comprising positioning means

for positioning said ~~covering~~ shielding means by using said driving means while an image forming operation of the image forming apparatus is inactive.

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): An image forming apparatus for electrophotographic image forming, comprising:

image carrying means for carrying an image formed with irradiation of a light beam;

optical writing means comprising:

a housing for enclosing an optical writing mechanism, said housing having an opening;

shielding dustproofing means for light-permeably shielding the opening;

light irradiating means for irradiating said image carrying means with the light beam through said shielding dustproofing means;

~~covering~~ shielding means for covering said shielding dustproofing means during an inactive state of the image forming apparatus and uncovering said shielding dustproofing means during an active state; and

cleaning means for cleaning an exterior of said shielding dustproofing means and configured to contact at least a part of the shielding dustproofing means during the active and inactive states.

Claim 26 (Canceled).

Claim 27 (Currently Amended): The image forming apparatus according to Claim 25, further comprising driving means for activating said ~~covering~~ shielding means.

Claim 28 (Currently Amended): The image forming apparatus according to Claim 27, further comprising positioning means for positioning said ~~covering~~ shielding means by using said driving means while an image forming operation of the image forming apparatus is inactive.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented): An optical writing method comprising the steps of:
storing an optical writing mechanism into a housing having an opening;
closing the opening with a light-permeable dustproof member;
emitting a light beam from inside the housing for irradiating an external image carrier through the opening and the dustproof member;

moving a shield between a first position at which the shield covers the light-permeable dustproof member when the optical writing mechanism is inactivated, and a second position at which the shield uncovers the light-permeable dustproof member; and

providing a cleaner to the shield in contact with at least a part of the light-permeable dustproof member configured to clean off an exterior of the light-permeable dustproof member when the shield is moved between the first and second positions in said moving step.

Claim 30 (Canceled).

Claim 31 (Original): The optical writing method according to Claim 29, wherein the shield is supported by a positioning member.

Claim 32 (Original): The optical writing method according to Claim 31, wherein the supporting member is driven by a driver.

Claim 33 (Previously Presented): An image forming method for electrophotographic image forming, comprising the steps of:

carrying an image by an image carrier; and

performing an optical writing method comprising the steps of:

storing an optical writing mechanism into a housing having an opening;

closing the opening with a light-permeable dustproof member;

emitting a light beam from inside the housing for irradiating the image carrier through the light-permeable dustproof member;

moving a shield between a first position at which the shield covers the light-permeable dustproof member when the image forming operation of the image forming method is inactivated, and a second position at which the shield uncovers the light-permeable dustproof member; and

providing a cleaner to the shield in contact with at least a part of the light-permeable dustproof member configured to clean off an exterior of the light-permeable dustproof member when the shield is moved between the first and second positions in said moving step.

Claim 34 (Canceled).

Claim 35 (Original): The image forming method according to Claim 33, wherein the shield is supported by a positioning member.

Claim 36 (Original): The image forming method according to Claim 35, wherein the supporting member is driven by a driver.

Claim 37 (Previously Presented): An image forming method for electrophotographic image forming, comprising the steps of:

carrying an image by an image carrier;

performing an optical writing method comprising the steps of:

storing an optical writing mechanism into a housing having an opening;

closing the opening with a light-permeable dustproof member;

emitting a light beam from inside the housing through the light-permeable dustproof member;

moving a shield between a first position at which the shield covers the light-permeable dustproof member when an image forming operation of the image forming method is inactivated, and a second position at which the shield uncovers the light-permeable dustproof member; and

providing a cleaner to the shield in contact with at least a part of the light-permeable dustproof member configured to clean off an exterior of the light-permeable dustproof member when the shield is moved between the first and second positions in said moving step.

Claim 38 (Canceled).

Claim 39 (Original): The image forming method according to Claim 37, the shield is supported by a positioning member.

Claim 40 (Original): The image forming method according to Claim 39, wherein the supporting member is driven by a driver.